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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 53rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 November 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. OUDOVENKO (Vice-President)	(Ukraine)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)

- Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic [32]

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Draft resolution

- Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations: note by the Secretary-General [7]

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- Question of Palestine [33] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 32

ZONE OF PEACE AND COOPERATION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC:

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/410 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.24)

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): Brazil is taking part with great satisfaction in the consideration of the agenda item related to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. Five years after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/11 by an overwhelming majority and the consequent establishment of the zone, this unique initiative has provided continuous evidence of purposefulness and bears witness to the foresight of that decision.

Since then, subsequent resolutions on the subject have received increasing support. As breathtaking developments are allowing for fresh approaches to a whole series of international issues, my delegation would hope that we are not far away from the moment when a resolution on this item will finally attain the unanimous support of Member States.

The establishment of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic was the translation, by the General Assembly, of deep-rooted aspirations of African and Latin American countries on both sides of the ocean. From the very inception of this idea, Brazil has remained committed to the advancement of the purposes and objectives of the zone. Those purposes are related to the universally recognized ideals of peace, cooperation and development, protection of the environment, fostering of human rights and fundamental freedoms, racial equality, justice and liberty, and are to be pursued for the mutual benefit of the peoples of all the countries of the zone.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

Recent developments in the area, together with the present revitalization of multilateralism, have given new impetus to the ideal of asserting the South Atlantic as the least-armed ocean in the world, in fulfilment of its vocation as an area for cooperation and peaceful contacts and dialogue between peoples on both its shores. The consolidation of Namibia's independence, the gradual dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa, the continuing improvement in understanding between Argentina and the United Kingdom, and the peace and national reconciliation agreement reached in Angola, as well as in Liberia, have all contributed towards enhancing the South Atlantic as a region of peace and cooperation.

The aspiration to peace in the zone was further reflected in, and strengthened by, the signing by the Presidents of Argentina and Brazil in Guadalajara, Mexico, on 18 July 1991, of the Agreement on the Exclusively Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, as well as by the signing of the Mendoza Declaration, on the basis of which Argentina, Brazil and Chile, and later Uruguay, formally renounced all chemical and bacteriological weapons.

As stated by President Fernando Collor in his address at this session of the General Assembly,

> "The international community faces three major challenges: the economic challenge of development, the political challenge of peace and the ethical challenge of ensuring a life of dignity for all. ...
>
> "It is development that assures the consolidation of democracy and represents the fundamental premise of peace." (A/46/PV.4, pp. 8 and 9)

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

We perceive the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic as an effective tool to foster development inasmuch as we are convinced of the importance of international cooperation between developing countries as a means to contribute to the creation of an economic environment conducive to a more just and equitable world order.

On the Latin American side of the ocean, long-standing expectations for economic integration and increasing cooperation led to the signing at Asuncion, on 26 March 1991, of the Treaty establishing the common market in the southern cone of the South American continent (MERCOSUR), to which Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, together with Paraguay, are founding parties. The common market, which will comprise a population of 180 million, is to become effective by 31 December 1994. We are confident that its implementation will have a favourable and far-reaching impact on the whole zone.

President Fernando Collor's official visits to Angola and to Namibia last September were an expression of Brazil's commitment to the strengthening of the ties of friendship and cooperation that link us to those two countries of the South Atlantic region. In Namibia, a joint communique was issued by Presidents Sam Nujoma and Fernando Collor, in which they agreed to work together for the promotion in 1992 of two high-level regional meetings within the framework of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic - that is, a meeting of Ministers for Industry and Trade, to take place in Windhoek, in order to explore ways and means for increasing trade links within the zone; and a meeting of high officials in the areas of youth and sports, to be held in Brasilia. It is our hope that those proposals will receive wide support, and that the holding of both meetings will further the efforts aimed at intensifying the links between the countries of the zone.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

The protection of the environment, consolidated in the concept of sustainable development, has in recent years reached the very top of the international agenda. The countries of the South Atlantic have always made clear their determination to work together to safeguard the environment in the zone, particularly with regard to the ocean that links and unites our countries. Looking back to resolution 41/11 and to the final documents of the high-level meetings at Rio de Janeiro and Abuja, one realizes that environmental protection has been at the heart of the concept of the zone of peace and cooperation, and there it remains.

In this connection, it is with great anticipation that we look forward to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which Brazil will have the honour to host in 1992. As my delegation had occasion to say at the general debate on the Conference in the Second Committee,

> "The Rio Conference is expected to make fundamental decisions aimed at promoting sustainable development on a global scale and at establishing a comprehensive agenda for action in this regard. No better opportunity has ever existed to write such a promising new page in the history of international cooperation."

Many important results will, we hope, come out of the 1992 Conference, and we are convinced that the advancement of the fundamental goals of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic will be counted among them.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Development Programme for the assistance provided for the holding of seminars in Brazzaville and Montevideo on the law of the sea and protection of the marine environment. We look forward to continued support for the follow-up activities of those meetings. I should also like to publicly acknowledge and hail the tireless

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

work of our friends from Nigeria in their role as efficient coordinators of the countries of the zone for the period 1990-1992.

The realization of the need to foster cooperation among developing countries, in a time of growing interdependence and globalization of the world economy, and a sincere desire for peace in the South Atlantic were at the foundation of the establishment of the zone, whose basic premise is the use of the ocean as a bridge to bring together the peoples of Africa and South America. Today, more than ever, these elements remain as the cornerstones of our common endeavours within the zone. Peace and cooperation, confidence and development: the path chosen by history to be followed by our world has demonstrated that there is no other way to ensure a life with dignity for all mankind.

The PRESIDENT: (interpretation from Arabic): I now call on the representative of Nigeria, who will introduce draft resolution A/46/L.24.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly is being held against a background of renewed hope for mankind and for a future that will give the necessary priority attention to the interrelated questions of peace, security, disarmament and development. The session thus acquires particular importance in the process of redefining the new challenges of enhancing international peace and security and strengthening global cooperation and development. In this post-cold-war situation, the Nigerian delegation sees the debate on agenda item 32, "Zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic", as an important contribution to our collective quest for a new world order in which each region of our globe becomes a bastion of peace and cooperation.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

A little over five years ago, the General Assembly adopted at its forty-first session resolution 41/11 on the "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic". This was the result of an initiative taken by some States of the region, including my own country, which saw the need to engage in more-intensive contacts and wider, mutually beneficial cooperation. The initiative meant making efforts to remove the barriers of centuries of separation. It also meant hope for an end to the then-prevailing circumstance of cold-war confrontation, which encompassed, among other regions, the South Atlantic, and thus posed a threat to the security of States in our region. Resolution 41/11 was thus the embodiment of our aspirations for peace and cooperation.

My delegation is pleased with the progress made so far towards this end. By promoting regional peace and cooperation through enhanced political understanding and socio-economic contacts, over the past five years the zone has demonstrated the wisdom and vitality of multilateral initiatives aimed at fostering regional peace and security. Above all, it has clearly established the complementarity between regional cooperation and efforts at enhancing global peace and security in all their aspects.

Nigeria, as Coordinator of the zone, commends the support of the Assembly and of the international community generally for the realization of the objectives of the zone. The annual General Assembly resolution on the item has continued to enjoy the ever-increasing support of the States Members of the United Nations, which fact illustrates the confidence of the international community in our efforts towards fulfilling the objectives of the zone. My delegation takes this opportunity to thank all Member States for this laudable encouragement and support. We also wish to place on record the appreciation

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

of all 23 Member States in the zone for the assistance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his staff, including the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, and for the support of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and his staff in the implementation of resolution 41/11. We look forward to further fruitful assistance and cooperation in various areas in the future.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, the States of the Zone have been exerting maximum effort for the attainment of their objectives. May I recall that resolution 45/36 of 27 November 1990, which drew its various elements from the Final Document of the second meeting on the Zone held at Abuja, Nigeria, from 25 to 29 June 1990, constituted an important advance in that it elaborated concrete areas for regional action.

The General Assembly will, I believe, share the satisfaction of the States of the South Atlantic with the progress made in the past year in the resolution of some of the conflicts in the region which have posed threats to regional peace and stability. Both regional and international initiatives have led to peace accords and increasingly fruitful efforts towards national reconciliation in Angola and Liberia. In the former, the United Nations has established the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement leading to democratic elections in 1993.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

In Liberia, the enlarged Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), under the Economic Community of West African States, is successfully enforcing the cease-fire and bringing about the return of peace, preparatory to the holding of national elections in 1992. Namibia has continued the commendable path of consolidating its independence under a peaceful, orderly, democratic and non-racial administration.

Developments in South Africa have been encouraging, giving hope that the days of institutionalized racism and minority white regime are destined to come to an end sooner rather than later. South Africa's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its signing of a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency have revived the hope of a truly nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. As an indication of the confidence being generated, other countries in the southern African region have also become parties to the NPT. Furthermore, the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held at Abuja last June adopted a resolution on measures towards the concrete implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa.

As for the Latin American sub-region of the zone, I am sure that the Assembly will note with satisfaction the agreement between Brazil and Argentina on the reciprocal inspection of each other's nuclear programme. This is a welcome confidence-building measure which will further encourage co-operation within the zone, especially in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We also note with satisfaction the initiative undertaken at the twelfth session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL) aimed at co-operation between the Latin American nuclear-weapon-free zone and the zone of peace and

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

cooperation of the South Atlantic. We welcome, in addition, the improved bilateral relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands.

Protection of the zone's environment has been high on the agenda of the States of the region. Their concerted efforts since the first meeting at Rio de Janeiro in 1988 have led to greater vigilance through the Dump-Watch mechanism aimed at monitoring and preventing the dumping of radioactive wastes in our territories and waters. Equally significant has been the individual and collective efforts of the States of the region in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. It is our expection that this important Conference will further enhance the objectives of the South Atlantic zone by addressing all aspects of environmental problems. In this connection, the zone has a special interest in safeguarding the South Atlantic Ocean from environmental pollution as an integral part of the non-military security of our States.

My delegation has already commended the assistance of the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which organized the second phase of a seminar at Montevideo, Uruguay, from 3 to 6 April 1991, devoted to the review and implementation of the legal regime established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as it affects the South Atlantic zone. It is Nigeria's hope that the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the UNDP will continue to render assistance towards implementation of the recommendations of the seminar. We also appeal to the UNDP and the relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations to render assistance in the area of technical cooperation

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

among the States of the zone, including funding for specific projects in the areas of communication, energy, water resources management, tourism, mining, agriculture and environmental protection.

I am pleased to report that Nigeria, as the current Coordinator of the zone, convened a consultative meeting of States Members of the zone at Lagos on 17 July 1991. The meeting deliberated on the practical measures and modalities for translating into action the important decisions and agreements reached at the second meeting held at Abuja in 1990. Key areas covered were intra-zonal security, trade, tourism, science and technology, economic co-operation and the environment. Agreement was generally reached on a framework for co-operation in these fields. It is expected that the third meeting of the States Members of the zone, in 1992, will further elaborate the decisions of the Lagos consultative meeting.

Permit me at this stage to introduce, on behalf of the States of the zone, the draft resolution contained in document A/46/L.24, sponsored by Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Benin, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uruguay and Zaire. The draft resolution recalls some of the important elements in General Assembly resolution 45/36, adopted last year, and reflects some of the key developments in 1991. The preambular paragraphs are essentially the same as in last year's resolution. However, there is an important and significant addition at preambular paragraph 5, which notes the global consensus on the conservation and management of marine living resources.

Operative paragraphs 1 and 2 are similar to those of last year's resolution. Paragraph 3 welcomes the Latin American initiative through

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

OPANAL, which is aimed at creating cooperative mechanisms between the Latin American nuclear-free zone and the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

Paragraph 4 affirms the determination of the States of the zone to preserve the region for all activities protected by relevant international law, including freedom of navigation.

Paragraph 5 is similar to last year's resolution. Paragraph 6 reflects the joint communiqué signed by the Presidents of Namibia and Brazil, aimed at fostering intra-zonal contacts in various social, economic and cultural spheres.

Paragraph 7 commends the success of the Namibian independence efforts. Paragraph 8 looks forward to a time when a non-racial, democratic South Africa will take its rightful place as a member of the zone. Paragraph 9 welcomes the peace agreements in Angola and Liberia and urges the international community to support these noble efforts.

Paragraph 12 reiterates the international community's call on all States to avoid the use of fishing methods and practices which, in particular, can have an adverse impact on the conservation and management of marine living resources. In light of the importance of fish resources to the countries of the zone, the draft resolution urges all States not to engage in the use of such fishing methods and practices that can have an adverse impact on the conservation and management of marine living resources in the zone.

Paragraph 13 stresses the importance of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled in Brazil in 1992. Paragraph 15 expresses the support of the General Assembly for the States of the zone in their efforts at developing intra-regional technical cooperation.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

After consultation on certain suggestions, the sponsors agreed to make the following minor changes in the text of the draft resolution. In paragraph 11, the sponsors agreed to replace the word "preserve" by the word "conserve", so that the paragraph would read:

"Emphasizes the imperative need to conserve the environment and the marine resources of the region, and urges all States to take necessary measures in order to protect the environment and conserve the marine resources;"

The sponsors have also accepted the suggestion that the phrase "in accordance with resolution 44/228" be added at the end of paragraph 13.

I hope that with those changes the draft resolution - which in our view is merely a further reflection of the positive mode of enunciating the objectives, hopes and aspirations of the States of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic - will be seen as non-controversial and that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): My country, Uruguay, could not fail to address the item before us today. Uruguay, a country with a high universalist calling, is participating with faith and enthusiasm in the reordering of alliances and geopolitical understandings with a view to rationalizing regional cooperation and rendering it effective on the basis of legitimate shared interests.

Let us be perfectly clear, this is not a question of promoting stagnant or antagonistic political or economic blocs, but rather of creating open mechanisms designed to promote a network of associations with a view to facilitating universal collaboration.

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

It is in that spirit that my country is participating in a number of systems of regional and subregional integration, among which I should like to mention the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), in association with Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, and the plan that will open up navigation of the Parana and Paraguay rivers, facilitating access to the Atlantic for Paraguay and Bolivia.

We are making these efforts at integration on the basis of the concept - so well expressed by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gros Espiell - that the conventional notion of a border as a separation has been replaced by the concept of a border as an element of cooperation. Our eastern border is the Atlantic Ocean, and beyond that vast ocean our border for cooperation is with the African continent.

Separated geographically from Africa, we are united - solidly united - by shared problems and shared aspirations. On this basis, my country understands and supports the struggle of the African peoples. Africa must play an important role in the international community, and it is for this reason that from the very outset my Government proclaimed its support for the candidacy of an African for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. Today, we are pleased at the outcome of the process that led to the selection of Mr. Boutros Ghali, a distinguished African who, we know, has been and is an enthusiastic advocate of the cause of cooperation between Africa and Latin America.

The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic reflects concretely and irreversibly our policy of rapprochement with Africa. Together with the sister nations of Argentina and Brazil, my country shares major

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

interests and vital responsibilities with the littoral African countries of the South Atlantic.

The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic thus reflects our will to cooperate in the promotion of those interests and our resolve to fulfil our responsibilities for the benefit, not only of the coastal States, but also of the international community as a whole.

One of the main objectives of the zone, as earlier speakers have pointed out, is to preserve the environment and protect the living resources of the South Atlantic. In this respect, I refer to paragraphs 10 and 11 of draft resolution A/46/L.24, which was submitted to us in an outstanding introductory statement by the representative of Nigeria. These paragraphs eloquently reflect our resolve to avoid the risk of the region's being adversely affected by the transfer and dumping of hazardous toxic and nuclear wastes. They also contain an exhortation to all States to take the necessary measures to protect the zone from environmental damage.

Another of the objectives of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic - which is universal in scope and which is also reflected in the draft resolution - relates to the concern of member countries to preserve the region from the risks implicit in the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The progress achieved towards this noble end is indeed very encouraging. On this side of the Atlantic we note with great satisfaction the Joint Declaration on Nuclear Policy by Argentina and Brazil, which will contribute decisively to the full enforcement of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Similarly, the Declaration of Mendoza, in which Chile participated and to which Uruguay has acceded, reflects the will of those countries to make progress towards denuclearization of the zone.

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

On the other side of the South Atlantic, we are pleased to refer to the accession of the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This strengthens the possibility that in the near future the ideal of the effective denuclearization of the African continent will become a reality.

In this context we should like to note the accession of the Government of South Africa to the aforementioned non-proliferation Treaty. We hope that this action on the part of Pretoria will be part of a rapid and effective process towards the complete dismantling of the odious system of apartheid. At that point, the South African nation, truly free, pluralist and multiracial, will be able in the near future to become an important member of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

I believe that I have demonstrated the responsible and effective way in which the members of the zone view the global dimensions of their obligations in respect of the present and the future of the South Atlantic. We have shown that in defence of our vital interests we are respectful of the rights of the other States of the international community. Thus, far from trying in any way to impede the right to free navigation, let us enshrine this principle of international law in all instruments that we have signed and will sign, as well as in draft resolutions submitted to the Assembly for consideration.

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

The community of nations, we are convinced, will help us to achieve our objectives of safeguarding and protecting the zone. We will do so in complete harmony with that source of law constituted by the principles and norms of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and undoubtedly our initiatives will be completely consistent with the instruments that emerge from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which will take place in June in Rio de Janeiro.

May I now briefly consider the other dimension of the objectives that have been set by the member countries of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. I refer to the goals of mutual cooperation to which these States have committed themselves on the basis of important common interests.

Let us first of all refer to the very significant fact that at the political and social levels the Governments of the countries of the zone, in response to the aspirations of their peoples, attach special importance to the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and racial equality as indispensable prerequisites for the strengthening of peace and cooperation at the national and regional levels.

On this basis the countries of the zone are involved in a vast programme of mutual assistance that involves the harmonization of national maritime policy and respective legal instruments, with emphasis on provisions related to the protection of the environment and living and non-living resources, including the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the marine environment.

Five years after the establishment of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the progress achieved in the implementation of the Declaration is truly encouraging. Following the second meeting of the member

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

countries held in Abuja from 25 to 29 June 1990, important meetings of a group of experts have been held. The first of these was held in Brazzaville from 12 to 15 June 1990 and the second in Montevideo from 3 to 6 April 1991.

A series of specific recommendations to States emerged from the last seminar. In this connection Uruguay gives priority to three areas: first of all, the harmonization of marine legislation. Here it would be appropriate to develop a network of national focal points in charge of gathering and exchanging information. It would also be appropriate to broaden the assistance provided by the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in the States of the zone of peace and cooperation in respect of their marine legislation and planning policies.

The excellent organization by the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the seminars of experts reaffirms our impression that the Office can become a source of faster progress in this area.

Our second priority is marine research. The States of the zone of peace and cooperation, through the above-mentioned network of information, will be able to develop a regional system for an exchange of scientific data on the living and non-living resources of the area under their jurisdiction.

The third priority is the marine environment. States must cooperate in the strict implementation of their legal provisions on the protection of the marine environment. They must take the necessary measures to avoid any environmental impact on marine resources and to refrain from dumping any nuclear or dangerous substances in their maritime areas of national jurisdiction and in the zone of peace and cooperation or its surrounding area.

All these meetings and activities demonstrate the resolve with which the

(Mr. Piriz Ballon, Uruguay)

countries of the zone are trying to achieve the objectives that they share. The prospects for the future are undoubtedly extremely promising, above all if we take into account the political evolution of the two continents towards the consolidation of democracy and the reaffirmation of the political and social ideals that the Member States have adopted as a basis for economic development.

The end to the internal political conflicts in Angola and Liberia, as well as the firm prospects of a negotiated solution to the dispute in the Malvinas, are important facts that reaffirm our optimism about the future of the zone.

Undoubtedly, the efforts made by the member countries constitute the best example of what can be achieved in horizontal South-South cooperation.

The international community cannot be indifferent to the major endeavour that the developing countries of the South Atlantic have undertaken. We must support these efforts. Thus, my delegation urges the States represented in this Assembly to adopt without a vote the draft resolution which has been submitted to us and which expresses the legitimate hope that the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies will give their financial and technical support for the complete attainment of the objectives of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

May I conclude my statement by expressing our profound appreciation for the effective way in which Nigeria and its representatives have coordinated the activities of the members of the zone, with a view to attaining its objectives.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde): My country embraced with enthusiasm the initiative that led to the adoption by the General Assembly of the 1986 Declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

We did so because we believed that the creation of an environment of peace and security in the area would bring about political relaxation and build up confidence among countries of the zone which would facilitate their much needed economic development.

We are glad to note that the novel concept of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation is taking hold as an important contribution of countries of the area to the strengthening of international peace and security.

The importance of the zone is even more evident today than ever, at a time when all nations seem to be reaffirming, with renewed energy, their commitment to build a safer and more secure world and when disarmament measures of great importance are being taken.

We believe that the South Atlantic should remain an area free from military confrontation and from nuclear arms, and States should mobilize their resources towards economic development.

We note with satisfaction that, since the adoption of the Declaration, the security goal of the South Atlantic has been respected by countries of the area, as well as by outsiders.

We note with satisfaction that cooperation among the South Atlantic countries is also developing. We encourage this cooperation and call on the international organizations to assist them in this endeavour.

The primary binding force that brought the South Atlantic countries together is the Atlantic Ocean whose resources and benefits they share.

It is therefore to be expected that their cooperation on ocean-related matters assume a particular relevance. Thus, at a time when all nations seem to be serious about environmental degradation, the South Atlantic countries'

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

concern for the preservation of their marine environment, is not only legitimate, but also should command the support of the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

In this context, we are determined to defend the South Atlantic marine environment from the disposal of hazardous, toxic or nuclear wastes that pose a serious threat to the marine environment and resources of the countries of the zone. We also share the view that all countries should cooperate in the preservation and protection of marine resources so as to benefit, in a harmonious manner, all those that exploit them. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to refrain from using methods of fishing that can have an adverse impact on the marine resources of the zone. We believe that coordinated efforts on research-related matters and cooperation on ocean issues of common concern among countries of the area would very much help to promote the goal of cooperation in the South Atlantic zone. We are pleased to note the significant progress being made in the field of human rights and democratization in the countries of the zone. We encourage such progress, as it creates a better environment for cooperation and development among those countries and strengthens the premises on which security in the zone should be based.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to announce that Cameroon and Gabon have become sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.24.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.24.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zimbabwe

Against: United States of America

Draft resolution A/46/L.24 was adopted by 141 votes to 1 (resolution 46/19).*

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau, Liechtenstein, Samoa and Vanuatu advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

Mr. SHIGEIE (Japan): I have asked to speak in order to comment on draft resolution A/46/L.24, which has just been adopted. As my delegation stated in its explanation of vote last year, Japan believes that an internationally recognized zone of peace should only be established through, and subject to, multilateral negotiations and agreements among all the parties concerned, and not by means of a single General Assembly resolution. That is my delegation's basic position, and it remains unchanged.

At the same time, however, my delegation is pleased to note that this year's resolution demonstrates that progress is being made in that direction. First, paragraph 4 provides clearer assurance of freedom of navigation; and secondly, greater emphasis is placed on interregional cooperation in the light of improved political and other conditions in the regions concerned.

In view of this progress, and fully understanding the aspirations of and the initiatives taken by the countries of the region to promote peace and cooperation through the framework of a zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic, Japan voted in favour of draft resolution A/46/L.24.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): The United States would like to take this opportunity to explain, regretfully, why we had no alternative to voting once again against the draft resolution on this item. First, however, we thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for making a sincere attempt to address one of our major concerns, that of freedom of navigation, in paragraph 4. In view of the territorial claims of some States in the region, however, the resolution insufficiently protects the freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as the right of innocent passage through territorial waters and seas, as established under customary international law.

(Mr. Watson, United States)

My Government also remains concerned that the underlying 1986 resolution purported to create an internationally recognized zone of peace by General Assembly fiat. That concern is not addressed by the current resolution. The United States believes that zones of peace can be created only through multilateral negotiations among the relevant parties. In this case, such negotiations have never taken place. We further note that the resolution refers to the proposed zone in the present tense, implying that it already exists.

Our third concern is that the resolution refers to a number of issues, such as hazardous wastes, developmental assistance and fishing methods, which have little to do with the subject of the resolution.

Miss MENDES (Portugal): As it had done with similar texts at previous sessions, Portugal was pleased to support draft resolution A/46/L.24, which has just been adopted, concerning the zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic. We reiterate our recognition of the important and most positive trends taking place in international relations, even if in certain areas regional conflicts have yet to be solved. In that light, the resolution just adopted contributes to the strengthening of international peace and cooperation in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We support the reference, in paragraph 9, to the peace agreements signed in Estoril last May, which paved the way for peace in Angola in accordance with the wishes of all Angolans. As that region has always been very special to Portugal owing to longstanding historical ties, my country feels very privileged to have contributed to the Estoril peace agreements, which not only

(Miss Mendes, Portugal)

brought peace to a suffering country, but also restored stability in that African region situated in the South Atlantic, where the vast majority of Portugese-speaking countries are located.

We have expressed our reservations several times in the past with regard to the inadequate geographical delimitation of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. In view of that position, we note with interest the general improvements in the wording of the present resolution, particularly in paragraph 8.

Mr. STEFANINI (France) (interpretation from French): Since we have long-standing ties of friendship and cooperation with the States in the South Atlantic region and since we are in favour of efforts to ensure cooperation between States at the regional level, France voted in favour of the draft resolution that has just been adopted, as it has done on draft resolutions on this item in the past.

My country, however, wishes to express once again its reservations with regard to the idea of a zone of peace in the South Atlantic that is still enunciated in the text before the Assembly. Our concerns relate primarily to the uncertainties about the geographical limits of the envisaged zone as well as the exact nature of the obligations to be assumed by the States involved.

I should also like to recall that France has always attached great importance to ensuring that the establishment of peace zones or denuclearized zones do not in any way violate the rules of international law, particularly those related to the use of sea and air space.

Finally, my delegation would like to make it clear, with regard to paragraph 13 of the resolution, that the Rio de Janeiro Conference to be held in June 1992, in accordance with resolution 44/228, should not deal with the particular problems of a specific regional zone.

France hopes that its position, like those of other delegations that have spoken on this item, will be taken into account next year by the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 32.

AGENDA ITEM 7

NOTIFICATION BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL UNDER ARTICLE 12, PARAGRAPH 2, OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/479)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the Note by the Secretary-General (A/46/479) on this item?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 7.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE:

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/46/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/623 and Corr.1)

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): The discussion of the question of Palestine at this session acquires special significance that stems from recognition of the need to reaffirm the necessity and legitimacy of continuing to consider this important question particularly in this august Assembly. Such an affirmation at this and subsequent stages reflects the profound concern arising from the increasing attempts aimed at decoupling the organic connection between this question and the United Nations. Although such attempts are not new, they have begun to crystallize in dangerous shapes recently, under the guise of practicality and expediency, and this tendency has found its way into the committees and bodies of the United Nations.

The recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to self-determination and the establishment

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

of its independent State, constitutes a primary and basic premise which the United Nations has built upon and called for in its resolutions over many years in consonance with the will of the international community and the position of that community vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and in implementation of the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law and international legality.

United Nations resolutions have condemned the Zionist occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands. They have called for an end to this illegal occupation. They have denounced the policy of violence, repression and terrorism adopted by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people. They have condemned the policy of building settlements in the occupied territories. Over many years the international community as a whole has championed and supported the rights of the Palestinian people and has entrusted the United Nations with an essential and principal role in seeking a final just and comprehensive solution to this question.

The history of the question of Palestine clearly shows that the main objective of Zionist policy is the liquidation of the Palestinian question. Pursuit of this objective leads us to believe that this policy, which has received the constant support of the United States of America, has sought in a persistent and escalatng manner to prevent the United Nations from playing any role in solving this problem. This was made abundantly clear by the rejection of United Nations resolutions calling for the convening of the international peace conference under its auspices and the marginal role allotted to the United Nations at the recent Madrid conference.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

This has not developed separately from other tendencies. It is organically linked to the other thrust of this aggressive policy, namely the attempt to deprive the Palestinian question of its Arab national dimension through such ploys as the ongoing initiatives. The drive to strike separate deals under the pretext of concluding bilateral agreements aims, in the first instance, at aborting the original call to reach a comprehensive solution and, later, at the separation of the Palestinian question from its Arab national context.

Through the negation of both the international and Arab dimensions by rejecting and ignoring the resolutions of the League of Arab States and the Arab summit conferences as well as those of the United Nations, the Zionists wish to impart validity to their pet portrayal of the Palestinian question as a refugee problem, that is to say the problem of inhabitants of the territories they call Judea and Samaria instead of the name they are known by: the West Bank.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

The Zionist hope is that with the passage of time, this would make it possible to achieve the objective of obliterating the identity of the Palestinian people, stripping it of its vital attributes as a living people and relegating it to the status of a mere minority in Zionist society. It is with this aim in mind that the Zionist entity insists, with the support of the United States of America, on the annulment of the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people which has been recognized as such by the international community and which, that international community insists, should participate on an equal footing with other parties in any efforts or negotiations to resolve the Palestinian question.

On the other hand, the Zionist entity insists on holding on to the occupied Arab territories, on continuing to occupy and to go on building settlements on them and thereby categorically rejects the principle of land for peace.

The achievement of these aggressive objectives will lead to the liquidation of the Palestinian question, the perpetuation of the illegal Zionist occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, the consecration of the principle of the acquisition of land by force and the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Is it not right for us, therefore, to pose once again the same questions that we find ourselves forced to raise time after time in this august gathering about the meaning of the false pretensions of the United States and its allies regarding the so-called rule of law, the new world order and international legality? The assassination of the question of the people of Palestine - after so many years of bitter struggle, suffering and sacrifice,

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

after the killing of so many martyrs - is but a clear historic indictment of all those who adopt and support this heinous assassination. This indictment exposes the advocates of the so-called new world order and lays bare the bitter reality we must face: that the whole thing boils down to stark injustice and a ruthless drive to realize the colonial interests of those States whose aim is to control and dominate the Arab nation, to plunder and exploit its resources and to perpetuate its backwardness and dependent status. This calls to mind what was called the "Gulf crisis", which, in spite of everything that was said, was nothing but a plot to destroy Iraq as an independent Arab force so as to create propitious conditions to impose the American and Zionist will on the Arab nation, to sell out the interests of the Arab nation and, especially, to liquidate the Palestinian question.

When aggression was being perpetrated against Iraq, voices were raised suddenly with a lot of talk about international legality, the important role of the United Nations and the need to implement Security Council resolutions. Aggression against Iraq is now vaunted as one of the manifestations of the new era of international relations in the post-cold war period, a feature of the so-called new world order, a manifestation of the tendency to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, an aspect of the struggle against the degradation of the environment, and a sample of the upholding of the rule of law if we are to mention a few of such hollow slogans. However, after the destruction of Iraq, after the imposition of the immoral, inhuman and unprecedented blockade against the Iraqi people, of which millions - men, women and children - face death, as a result of this illegal blockade which flies in the face of the lofty purposes of the United Nations Charter and runs counter even to the

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

relevant Security Council resolution, with which Iraq fully complies, all the talk has subsided and all the slogans have disappeared.

After the disappearance of the slogans we begin to hear a new tune. We begin to hear a new kind of talk. For when it comes to addressing the Zionist occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories, the role of the United Nations disappears and, all of a sudden, its presence becomes irrelevant. The need to implement Security Council resolutions also evaporates, whether in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter or with any other chapter. No one speaks anymore of international legality, of the rule of law or of the imposition of blockades. And no one speaks of Israel's stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction or the danger posed by its nuclear arsenal.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

No one touches upon the racist policy pursued by the authorities of the Zionist entity against Palestinians under occupation. No one condemns the policies of murder, deportation and demolition of houses. Indeed, the exact opposite occurs: the advocates of so-called democracy heap praise upon the Zionist entity and its racist policies and, instead of urging or forcing it to implement United Nations resolutions of which there are dozens, they call for those resolutions to be repealed, especially the just resolution 3379 (XXX) of 1975, which quite rightly equates Zionism with racism. Instead of imposing sanctions on Israel because of its rejection of United Nations resolutions, they increase the material and political support they extend to Israel and cover up nuclear arsenals.

Here we can give one of very many examples. The New York Times newspaper, on 14 November 1991, (p. A6) reported a meeting between President Bush and American Jewish organizations in New York on 12 November. The report mentions that President Bush apologized for his statements against the Jewish lobby at his press conference of 12 September and renewed his call for the repeal of United Nations resolution 3379 (XXX). He also expressed his commitment to securing Israel's qualitative supremacy in armaments, and voiced his support for the Zionist position which considers Jerusalem as one and indivisible. He also voiced his strong feelings against what is called anti-semitism, and expressed his admiration for Shamir's performance at the Madrid conference, in spite of the fact that he knows that Shamir is just a terrorist, who has been wanted for trial for a long time now.

The unlimited support of the racist Zionist entity by the United States and its allies is the most telling example of the policy of double standards,

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

and the irrefutable evidence of the hollowness of the so-called new world order which is no order, because it has no firm stable foundations and no unified standards or criteria. Neither is it international, because it is not a world order that represents the totality of the international community, but an order that represents only the will of the United States of America and its allies. Nor is it new because, very simply, it is a regression to the hated era of imperialism. It is neither an order, nor is it international. And it is not new. The peoples of the world, as reflected in the statements of the majority of delegations in this Assembly, in truth aspire to a new world order that would be founded on the principles of right and justice, a true world order in which all would be equal and not victims of discrimination.

Those who seek peace in the Arab nation will not find it through partial or separate deals; neither will they find it in the annulment of the role of the United Nations, the total disregard of the organic links between the various parts of the Arab nation and the denial of the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The policy of the iron fist, nuclear superiority, racial discrimiation against the Palestinian people, the policy of dismemberment and weakening of the Arab nation and perpetuation of its backwardness, the sell out of its national interests and the imposition of the status quo upon it, shall never succeed in achieving its aggressive objectives.

The persistence of the American Administration and Zionist forces in claiming success for their designs cannot conceal the truth. The outward show of success will remain ephemeral, and certainly does not represent the truth of what is happening in the Arab homeland. Very simply, we believe that we

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

are all one Arab nation, a nation with deep roots that, like all other nations, does not accept occupation, rejects foreign domination and insists on regaining its legitimate rights to land, to wealth and to dignity.

Proceeding from the principles we believe in, my delegation wishes to reaffirm Iraq's unswerving support for the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain its inalienable rights. We support the heroic intifadah against the Zionist occupiers in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

We consider the Palestinian question to be the first Arab cause and the core of the conflict in the region. Its solution lies in the termination of the illegal zionist occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories as well as the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State on its national soil, with Al-Quds al-Shareef as its capital. That is the only road that will lead the region to lasting peace, security and prosperity. There is no other way.

Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka): The question of Palestine is one of the most crucial and complex problems inherited by the United Nations almost from its inception. For several decades the United Nations has endeavoured to find a political solution to the question of Palestine and bring peace to the region.

Innumerable resolutions have been adopted; several other steps have been taken. A Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been established. A special Division for Palestinian Rights has been set up within the Secretariat. Since 1978, 29 November has been observed as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In 1982 the General Assembly met in emergency session. In 1983 an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was held in Geneva. The General Assembly has endorsed the Geneva Declaration on Palestine. The Assembly has called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict.

And yet, with all that the General Assembly has done, despite a number of resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the question of Palestine has remained one to which practical solutions have seemed as elusive as ever. It

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

has been impossible to conceive of a resolution of the problem with equity and justice. The Palestine question is, of course, widely recognized as the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, with the end of the cold war, with the cold-war protagonists united in the Security Council in dealing with the crisis in the Gulf, events in the Middle East have moved with rapidity. We are particularly glad that the United States and the Soviet Union have persisted in their endeavours in convening the peace conference despite such daunting difficulties. We urge all the other nations and groups that attended the peace conference in Madrid to continue their efforts until a true and lasting peace has been established.

It is clear that what the United Nations has striven for all these years has not been lost. However, we regret that there is no United Nations participation as such at the Madrid peace conference. Even so, all those of us who sincerely hope for a resolution of a seemingly intractable problem dating back to very early times in history and of unusual complexity, with such deeply ingrained historical convictions on both sides, should welcome the beginning of a process whereby those who are directly involved have actually sat down to negotiate peace. The world community has pronounced itself clearly on the basic tenets of future agreements which can bring about a fair, just and lasting peace in the region.*

The delegation of Sri Lanka wishes to express its congratulations and good wishes to all those who have joined in the quest for peace. We would expect the honest brokers who have brought the parties together to continue

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* Mr. Oudovenko (Ukraine), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

their efforts to achieve the desired objectives. We express the hope that justice will prevail.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to reiterate our belief that a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Middle East will be possible only with the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestine and Arab territories. Only this can ensure the security of all States in the Middle East within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. AIT CHAALAL (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The General Assembly has begun its debate on the question of Palestine at a time when the struggle of the Palestinian people is going through one of the most crucial stages in its history. The succession of events in the past year and the upheaval in international relations have inevitably had an effect on all the major political issues considered by the General Assembly at this session. Therefore, the General Assembly should feel itself more than ever duty-bound to play its full role and assume the responsibility that it has wherever the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination is trampled upon, wherever fundamental human freedoms are violated and wherever international peace and security are under constant threat. The question of Palestine alone comprises all those aspects, despite the hopes that may have been raised by recent diplomatic initiatives, culminating in the Madrid conference. Therefore, the fact that the General Assembly is still this year actively considering the question of Palestine is not a matter simply of routine; rather, it is because it is its duty, arising out of the evolution of the question over past months, an evolution marked by the gravity of the situation, but also by hope.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

Peace and stability depend on law and justice, just as they do on the active and watchful commitment of the entire international community to preserve peace and security. The collective work and support of the international community in resolving many conflicts in recent years have been decisive. Many struggling peoples have benefited from this and world peace has emerged strengthened. Peoples have often been able to choose their destiny as well as their institutions in complete freedom with the support and respect of the international community. The most eloquent illustration of this is the increased number of States present in the Assembly.

For the Palestinian people it is precisely the simple right, held by peoples the world over, to choose their destiny and their institutions freely which has been claimed for over four decades. And the General Assembly in its overwhelming majority has understood this by reaffirming on many occasions that the settlement of the question of Palestine requires recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and especially its right to establish an independent and sovereign state on the territory of its homeland. By identifying the objectives of a global, just and lasting settlement, the General Assembly gave its solemn response to the many challenges involved in the question of Palestine.

Viewed in its political dimension, we cannot repeat too often that the question of Palestine was at the origin and remains at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East. This region, whose geostrategic, human and economic importance are clear, will not enjoy stability and equilibrium until the national problem of Palestine is resolved definitively, and it will remain a hotbed of tension likely to jeopardize international peace and security.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

Viewed in its human dimension, the question of Palestine constitutes a challenge to the universal conscience because the hardships of oppression, the tragedy of dispossession, the sufferings of exile and the humiliation of occupation are as revolting as they are intolerable for a society that considers itself civilized.

The result is that today Arab territories remain occupied in violation of the fundamental norms of international law and of the many decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. An Arab people remains subjugated and brutally repressed as it expresses its right to freedom. It is threatened in its physical integrity and in its dignity. It is condemned to the hardships of refugee camps which today harbour over 2.5 million Palestinians.

A Peace Conference on the Middle East was convened almost a month ago in Madrid. Clearly, the commendable and persevering efforts of Mr. James Baker, the United States Secretary of State, toward the convening of that conference and the holding of the Madrid session, are praiseworthy and encouraging. Of course those efforts were supported by the international community in so far as they echo the long Palestinian struggle and the heroic intifidah aimed at recovering the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and the need to put an end to the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories.

Because the Palestinian cause remains at the heart of the concerns of every Algerian and because we believe in the usefulness of any sincere effort to resolve the question of Palestine that will meet the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinians, Algeria considered it appropriate to support the initiative to convene the peace conference even though the institutional

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

framework, the modalities of representation and the negotiating procedures were far removed from our idea of an international conference on the Middle East.

We must recognize and emphasize that Palestinian participation in the Madrid conference was an act of great political courage. It was one more proof that the Palestinian people, under the aegis of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is prepared to make sacrifices for the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. That act of political courage, which commands respect, deserves recognition by the international community because all the peoples of the region will benefit from the resulting peace.

In spite of these few glimmers of hope, we must stress that the deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories remains a source of profound concern. The harshness of repression, the constant aggressiveness and the brazen disdain for resolutions of the Security Council - most recently Security Council resolutions 672 (1990), 673 (1990), 681 (1990) and 694 (1991) - are an illustration.

Thus, while the Madrid conference was being prepared and even while it was taking place, the repression of the intifadah continued with the same brutal methods being used. Thousands of Palestinians remained arbitrarily detained. Collective punishments, expulsions, dynamiting of homes, expropriation of Arab goods and lands, the plundering of natural resources all continue brutally and violently.

The situation in the occupied territories is well known and is accurately described in many reports that serve as a constant reminder of the exceptional seriousness of the hardships imposed on the Palestinians. In this regard, I

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

should like to pay tribute to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo, for its remarkable work and for the relevant documentation that the Committee continues to provide.

The report of the Committee rightly indicated that the many violations of major international legal instruments committed by Israel include the continued establishment of new settlements or the expansion of existing ones revealing, once again, Israel's real expansionist goal - to make the occupation of territories acquired by force irreversible.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

There is every sign that this policy will continue to be pursued, in contempt of the will of the entire international community. Thus, despite - or no doubt because of - the Madrid meeting, new settlements continue to be established. In Jerusalem, the dispossession of Arab property owners and the spread of settlements has reached unprecedented proportions, and it is important to note that Israeli leaders do not even attempt to hide this fact and arrogantly proclaim that their will to colonize and expand cannot be stopped or restrained.

The effort to dispossess the Arab populations is constant and growing. We must denounce and condemn it forcefully and firmly, because settlements are not only illegal but also a major obstruction on the already uncertain road to peace. Because it involves above all the Holy City of Jerusalem - where today only 40 per cent of the Arab population of 1967 remains and where over 120,000 Jewish colonists have settled - the continuation of this settlement policy constitutes an insurmountable obstacle that makes any chance for a settlement and for peace in the Middle East illusory.

The settlement of the Palestinian question has been delayed for over four decades because the real dimensions of the tragedy of the Palestinian people have been ignored. It has been considered a simple refugee problem, whereas it is a national issue resulting from repeated wars of agression and occupation. All past attempts at a settlement have failed because of a deliberate disregard for the comprehensive nature of the conflict and its core, which lies in the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people. Today again, the settlement of the question of Palestine and of the conflict in the Middle East remains dependent on those factors.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

No settlement can be lasting without a recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent and sovereign State in its homeland. It is up to the Palestinian people alone, under the aegis of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to choose its representatives to participate, on an equal footing, in all stages of the settlement process.

No settlement to the conflict is conceivable without a total withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Arab territories in Palestine, including Jerusalem, and in Syria and Lebanon. In this respect, the policy of colonization must come to an end and the settlements must be dismantled. The inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force is a principle not subject to interpretation or discussion; it is a universal and unassailable principle that constitutes the very basis of the Security Council resolutions on which hinges the peace process currently under way in the continuation of the Madrid Conference.

The United Nations owes an immense debt to the Palestinian people, commensurate as much with its duties under the Charter as with its historic responsibility in the genesis of the tragedy today being experienced by the Palestinian people. The latest developments, which open up new prospects, must in no way serve as a pretext for those who would like to marginalize the United Nations. On the contrary, they should encourage us more than ever to strengthen its role and to increase its contribution to the settlement of the Palestinian question by working with resolve and vigilance to implement the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The entire world agrees that the Palestine Liberation Organization has unceasingly demonstrated its profound awareness of its historic responsibilities towards its people and in relation to the international

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

community. Despite the unjustifiable ostracism to which it has been subjected, it has succeeded in thwarting manoeuvres and traps, has persevered in its clearly affirmed determination to work tirelessly for a negotiated settlement of the conflict, and has promoted every opportunity for peace, however slim. By their presence in Madrid, the Palestinians have shown once again their sense of responsibility and their maturity, and the spirit of conciliation that inspires them.

In contrast with this attitude of openness and dialogue, Israel persists in total instransigence. It categorically rejects all principles universally accepted as the basis for serious and constructive negotiations. It either rejects in their entirety the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations or else purely and simply strips them of their content and meaning.

Israel denies everything and rejects everything. Alone, or virtually so, it wants to prevail over everyone and impose its will on the vast majority of the international community. It therefore assumes the heavy responsibility of derailing the negotiation process so painstakingly begun, of undermining the chances for peace, and of taking the immense risk of creating conditions conducive to further outbreaks of violence in the region. With its entire credibility at risk, can the United Nations continue to tolerate such a challenge?

At a time when the establishment of the new world order is becoming the central theme of new political discourse on the heels of the great upheavals that have characterized world geopolitics, the way in which the question of Palestine will be dealt with in the months ahead will certainly constitute a test of the principles, nature and goals of that new order, about which many are quite rightly sceptical.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

If it turns out that this new order is based on the prevalence of justice and fairness, and that it enshrines the supremacy of people's rights and international legality over brutal force and the hegemonic spirit of domination, then it will be possible to view on the horizon of a troubled, hard and uncertain world a glimmer of hope and confidence that may augur well for a new, more promising and more equitable era to come.

(Mr. Ait Chaalal, Algeria)

The tragic experience of one region of the Arab world in the past year has underscored the deep involvement of the United Nations, which justified its action by arguing that it was in conformity with the principles of the Charter and that it was determined to ensure respect for international law. If the Organization wishes to convince the world of the sincerity of its intentions and the credibility of its world-wide mission, it must show that the principles it has enforced in the past still hold good today and that they will be applied everywhere and in all circumstances, whenever international legality needs to be defended.

The Palestinian question now offers the Organization a golden opportunity to prove to the peoples of the world observing it and judging its work, that it does not apply double standards, and that its only guideline is that of right and justice throughout the world in the service of peace and fairness.

There is no doubt that the United Nations would then reawaken the great hopes that gave it birth in the wake of the horrifying disaster of the Second World War, thereby reassuming its original mantle as the architect of a peaceful and better world.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): My delegation wishes to congratulate the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for having convened a peace conference in Madrid recently. It gives the parties involved the opportunity to look for a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question, which is the core problem in the Middle East situation. Brunei Darussalam is following the talks with great interest. We do not expect an immediate solution to the problem, but my delegation welcomes the

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

initiative as the first step towards an agreement acceptable to all the conflicting parties. We hope that talks will continue.

We regret, however, that Israeli attitudes stand in the way of a successful outcome. The Israeli authorities have again built settlements in the occupied territories. To the consternation of the international community, settlements were opened on the Golan Heights soon after the Madrid conference ended. It was reported, on 4 November, that Israel had inaugurated a new settlement for Soviet immigrants on the Golan Heights.

These actions pose serious challenges to any spirit of compromise. Brunei Darussalam joins the call of the United States of America, as well as that of the Arab States in the region, for Israel to cease pursuing its settlement policies in the occupied territories. Israel needs to show a commitment to support its expressed desire for peace. The Arab parties have done so, but Israel continues to make demands instead of offering compromises.

Noting the concessions from the Palestinians and other Arab States, my delegation expects to see Israel being more accommodating. Although it may not be realistic to expect peace immediately, we urge Israel to show that it does indeed want peace. Israel's continued presence in the occupied territories continues to give rise to tension and conflict. My delegation therefore supports the international calls for Israel to withdraw from all the occupied territories.

The Palestinian people have paid the highest price for the continued belligerence of the Israeli authorities. Under Israeli rule, the Palestinians have been subjected to curfews, detention without trial, collective punishment and demolitions of homes and farms, confiscations of lands and restrictions

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

on economic activities. All these have been aimed at crushing the spirit of the Palestinian people in the quest for a homeland. The policy of the Israeli authorities in arbitrarily expelling and deporting Palestinians has begun to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories. These repressive measures taken by the occupying authorities must cease, as they are clearly in violation of the principles of international law, especially with regard to the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

My delegation calls upon Israel to respect and implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). They represent the wishes of the international community. If peace in the region is to be realized it is essential for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, dismantle its settlements there and recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his continuous efforts on the question of Palestine. We would also like to express our appreciation to the various committees, including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for their untiring efforts in carrying out the tasks mandated to them by the Secretary-General.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly considers the question of Palestine at this session in the context of the international changes which started a few years ago and reached their culmination this year. They have led the international community down the path of understanding, away from an era of confrontation, tension and

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cold war, towards an era of détente, dialogue, cooperation, the correction of relations between States and peoples, the reduction of armaments, the reinforcement of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and rejection of all forms of expanionism, aggression, occupation and violation of the rights of people.

Although the solution to the problems of the Middle East had been put on the back burner for a while as the world was concerned with solving other regional problems, the call for peace in the Middle East has now become an overwhelming tide. Today there is international unanimity on this subject. For the first time in the history of the Arab-Israli conflict, the world agrees on considering the achievement of peace in the Middle East a necessity and a prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security.

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Hence the initiative of the United States of America and the Soviet Union to co-sponsor an international conference on peace for all peoples of the Middle East. As a result of the unremitting efforts of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, it became possible to convene the International Conference in Madrid.

Notwithstanding Israel's intransigent stance, my country decided to participate in this Conference, which aimed at reaching a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement within the framework of international legality, on the basis of United Nations resolutions. The Syrian delegation participated in the Conference in spite of my country's many reservations on the Conference's format and its terms of reference. We did that in order to try and reach a just resolution to all aspects of the Arab-Israeli dispute on all fronts.

During my delegation's bilateral negotiations with the Israeli side, the Israeli delegation spoke of everything except the land which Israel occupied and continued to occupy for more than 24 years. The Israeli delegation's claim was that land has no relation to peace.

Peace in our region cannot be achieved without Israeli withdrawal from the Arab occupied territories. The basic formula is land for peace. Our delegation spoke of that equation. As for the Israeli delegation, it dropped land from the equation and spoke only of the Israeli concept of peace. So long as Israel chooses to speak only of one part of the land for peace equation, there is no way that peace can be achieved.

Indeed, Israeli statements and practices before, during and in the wake of the Madrid Conference, show that Israel is prepared to try everything and anything, even the impossible, in its bid to sabotage every international peace effort and to blow up every bridge that may lead to a just and comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel did build a new

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settlement near Al-Quds just before the Madrid Peace Conference and on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, a new settlement was inaugurated on 4 November just after the Conference. All this is part of an intensive settlement programme whose objective is to create a new reality on the ground, making any just and comprehensive solution impossible to reach.

On the 11th of this month, the Israeli Knesset adopted a resolution that consecrated the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and declared it unnegotiable. The Knesset resolution states that the Golan Heights are an indivisible part of Israel and a necessary element of its security. It calls upon the Israeli Government to ensure the development of the Golan Heights and to encourage settlement therein. That resolution is in direct contradiction of the spirit of the Madrid Peace Conference. It brings to light Israel's intentions with regard to peace and is in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Furthermore, that resolution runs counter to Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which declared Israel's decision to annex the Syrian Golan Heights as null and void and devoid of any legal validity.

Yesterday, the representative of Israel spoke in this hall and reaffirmed the Israeli delegation's position on direct negotiations, namely, that Israel rejected giving up occupied Arab land and returning to the borders of 1967. He invoked the argument that Israel was a small State surrounded by ever-present dangers and thus required strategic depth for its defence, and that to this end it must retain control of the northern heights so as to give itself the time necessary to mobilize its army in time of war.

Habitually, the leaders of Israel justify their wars of aggression against the Arabs by invoking the spectre of an Arab threat to Israel.

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However, in the aftermath of the 1967 aggression, they declared that Israel had never been in any danger, neither in 1967 nor at any previous time, and that the so-called threat of extermination on which Israeli information focused just before and after the 1967 war was only a pretext to justify the war. Within this very same context, it can be said that the Israeli 1982 invasion of Lebanon was undertaken under the same pretext. Under the heading "security for Galilee", the Israelis killed tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians, destroyed villages and towns and perpetrated the ugliest massacres.

In an article by the former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban published in the New York Times, he called on Israel's friends to avoid creating the myth of a weak Israel. He said:

> "Talk of Israel's extermination is nowhere taken seriously by those who know the power balance; it is interpreted as justification for immobilism or pre-emptive aggression." (The New York Times, 2 January 1989, p. 23)

The concept of secure borders for Israel is based on a massive hoax. Israel insults our intelligence when it justifies its expansionist ambitions by the need for secure borders. Are there really any secure geographical borders in our times? Technological progress and sophisticated modern weaponry, of which Israel possesses the very latest in abundance have made all talk of secure borders irrelevant. There is not a single State in the world that can boast any secure geographical borders. Real security is that which is built on justice and on the absence of feelings of injustice in neighbouring States. Real security is built on respect for international law and commitment to the principles of the Charter, all of which, of course, do not agree with Israel's expansionist objectives.

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The secure borders which Israel talks so much about are merely the ever expanding, ever mobile borders which Israel wants for itself and which it wishes to acquire by changing the human and economic composition of the occupied Arab territories by bringing millions of settlers from all parts of the world to "Judaize" the Arab occupied territories with the ultimate aim of realizing the dream of greater Israel which fires the imaginations of fanatical Jews. Mr. Shamir has said it: "Greater Israel, from the sea to the river, is my creed and personal dream". Is the man who said that the same man whom the Israeli delegate introduced to us yesterday as a man of peace?

Through a cyclical series of wars and successive acts of aggression, Israel has sought to realize that dream. Mr. James Baker, United States Secretary of State, called for an end to that dream in his statement before the Israeli American Public Relations Committee on 24 May 1989.

The Israeli delegate has shed tears over Lebanon; Lebanon, which Israel invaded twice; Lebanon, whose towns and capital were bombed by Israeli aircraft and artillery; Lebanon, which the Israeli secret services attempted to transform into warring communal factions. The Israeli delegate's tears may have been over the fact that Lebanon has regained its health and unity and has overcome the strife which Israel has been nurturing for dozens of years. The truth of the matter is that the Israeli delegate was lamenting the collapse of the ill-fated May agreement through which Israel tried to impose its tutelage on Lebanon.

The question of Palestine has returned to the top of international political concerns after so many unfair attempts at marginalizing it. International public opinion has begun to be aware of Israel's expansionist

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policies and Israel's rejection of peace. This requires the international community to bring maximum pressure to bear on Israel to prevent it from sabotaging peace efforts.

Israel has always denied the very existence of the Palestinian people after having expelled many Palestinians and forced those who remained to live under repressive conditions intended to make them understand that they had only two options: die or leave.

Amnesty International's 1991 report states that nearly 25,000 Palestinians were arrested because of the intifadah in the Arab occupied territories, that more than 4,000 were subjected to administrative detention without charges or trial and, furthermore, that several thousands were tried before military tribunals. At the end of 1990, more than 13,000 were languishing in jails or under detention.

The question of Palestine is not merely a question of the inalienable political rights of a people. It is also, on a human level, a question of civil and human rights. The majority of the Palestinian people have been made refugees over the past decades, while at the same time the Israeli authorities continue to settle Jewish immigrants in the Arab occupied territories in naked defiance of international public opinion. The entire world is now aware that the question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Arab-Israeli dispute, is not just a problem of inhuman Israeli practices or a mere refugee problem. It is the cause of an entire people whose land has been taken and whose rights have been violated, and unless a just and enduring solution is found for this question on the basis of United Nations resolutions the Arab-Israeli dispute will continue.

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Mr. Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary of Great Britatin, has said,

"One must sympathize with the Palestinians. Their land is occupied and they have no political rights. They are daily the victims of a deceptive policy which believes that Israel's security must be based on the closing of schools, the building of illegal settlements and even collective punishments."

Despite all that, despite all these tragedies, we have not lost the hope of achieving peace. We continue to look forward to the resumption of the Peace Conference. We hope that Israel will re-examine its behaviour and will stop swimming against the current, the current of peace coupled with justice.

Mr. MAVROMMATIS (Cyprus): The question of Palestine, being at the core of the Middle East problem, is one of the most serious challenges facing the world community and it could be considered a test case for the new international order upon which we are embarking.

The problem of Palestine persists as a result of the denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. The liberation of their homeland, the attainment of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent sovereign State, are the necessary prerequisites for a just and viable solution to the problem.

The Palestine problem has been on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly for more than 40 years. Throughout this period, a series of resolutions have upheld the just aspirations of the Palestinian people. These resolutions, unfortunately, have not been implemented and are systematically disregarded.

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Cyprus's geographical proximity to the Middle East, our traditionally friendly ties with the countries of the region and, above all, our principled stance against any aggression or foreign occupation, together with our deep concern and committment to a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, place us, both as a people and as a country, behind the current efforts for a just solution to the Middle East problem, a necessary prerequisite for peace and stability in our region. We have always supported the Palestinian cause in all forums and encouraged efforts to promote the rights of the Palestinian people. We have done so through our membership in the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, which through its work complements and supplements the efforts to bring a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and also by offering Cyprus as a venue for conferences, symposia or meetings that would help in the quest for a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Mavrommatis, Cyprus)

Our sincere concern about the matter has led us, together with most of the members of the international community, to call on every occasion for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestine question in accordance with the Charter, the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and the generally accepted rules and principles of international law.

Accordingly, we have consistently taken the position that for any solution to be just and viable it must provide for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as well as from all other Arab territories occupied since 1967. In this connection, we have also joined the international community in calling upon Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights, which we regard as an inseparable part of Syria, as well as from southern Lebanon.

The developments in the Gulf, and particularly the emerging enhanced role of the United Nations, as well as the prevailing political climate of conciliation in world affairs create the ideal environment for an effective effort to achieve a permanent solution to the problem which not only will vindicate the just strugle and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people but also will guarantee the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live within internationally recognized and secure borders.

A peaceful settlement in the Middle East is in the circumstances one of the most important problems requiring solution without delay. The recent experience in the Gulf indicated clearly that such a hotbed of tension can easily erupt, with incalculable consequences for the region and peace and security in general.

Although certain unilateral actions - such as new Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights and elsewhere, as well as the recent Israeli attacks in

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southern Lebanon - poison the climate of guarded optimism created recently during the peace talks in Madrid - there are other hopeful signs that augur well for building the climate necessary to serve the cause of peace. The face-to-face talks between Israelis and each one of the Arab parties directly involved in the dispute, and particularly those between the Israelis and the Palestinians, were such hopeful signs.

The role of the United States and the Soviet Union in the peace process is of paramount importance if there is to be a successful outcome. The readiness of the United States to act continuously as an honest broker is an important factor in achieving progress during this difficult and complex exercise.

United Nations peace-keeping operations continue to play a special role in conflict resolution. United Nations peace-keeping efforts in recent years have been marked not only by the growing number and scope of operations but also by the greater diversity of the goals they pursue. The current trend seems to be departing from the classical pattern of disengagement through a buffer zone and cease-fire monitoring, and is becoming more multi-component in its functions. The examples of Namibia, Central America and the existing outlines for a Cambodian settlement have demonstrated that the United Nations is becoming more active in implementing a whole set of measures to reduce tensions, re-establish confidence, achieve peaceful settlement of disputes, organize free and fair elections, provide humanitarian assistance to civilian populations and ensure the application of international standards in the field of human rights.

However, in some cases the presence of United Nations observers for many years, although invaluable, has at best been limited to monitoring or

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containing conflicts, and is not fully geared to assisting the negotiating process or the return to normal conditions. This is true, inter alia, in the case of the Middle East, including Lebanon, and also Cyprus, despite persistent and untiring efforts by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

To revert to the question of Palestine, I should like to refer to General Assembly resolution 45/68, of 6 December 1990, which called

> "once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council ..." (resolution 45/68, para. 2)

It is now up to the parties to exhibit the necessary political will to achieve a lasting peace. The majority of the peoples on both sides have demonstrated clearly their willingness to follow the path of peace instead of that of war, conflict and enmity. Such manifestations, whether called "marches for peace" or "olive-branch gestures", are definitely evidence of the ordinary peoples' determination to work for peaceful coexistence.

Although the negotiations on such a long-standing and complex dispute will undoubtedly take much time before bearing fruit, the fact that a peaceful process, under international auspices, has been launched is by itself a victory for the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes.

It is the wish and hope of the people and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus that this process will result in a viable and lasting solution to the Middle East problem based on the norms and rules of international law, the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the matter.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer for the League of Arab States.

Mr. EL-FARRA (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a source of satisfaction to the League of Arab States to see you presiding over the deliberations of the General Assembly in the name of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which plays a pioneering role in diplomacy and international relations. Your wisdom, culture and knowledge are a guarantee that this session will be crowned with success. During previous meetings you have given proof of your wisdom in presiding over the sessions of the General Assembly. We believe that its remaining deliberations will underline your success and wise leadership.

I cannot fail to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his role and the valuable service he has rendered to the international community, as well as his laudable efforts which were characterized by objectivity and a sincere desire to find solutions to the world's problems.

It is a source of great pleasure for the League of Arab States, its Secretary-General, Dr. Esmat Abdul Maguid, and for me personally to note the resolution of the Security Council recommending the General Assembly to choose Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. Dr. Ghali is a very able diplomat who has played an effective role in the policies of his country and has contributed to solving many problems on both the Arab and the African levels. He has also a great many academic contributions to his credit, and has written extensively on international law. I have no doubt whatsoever that the resolution of the Security Council will receive the support of the General Assembly.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

I should like on this occasion to express my deepest thanks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to its Chairman, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, for her continuing laudable efforts in support of the question of Palestine.

The developments currently taking place in international relations, and in the field of regional and international cooperation, are cause for great optimism and hope that a new world order will emerge and replace strife and confrontation with economic and human cooperation and ensure that the resolutions and values of international legality will be respected, implemented and applied.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

The phenomenon of the cold war has disappeared from the relations of the two super-Powers and has been replaced by a spirit of cooperation and détente. This will be of great benefit to the international community and to the cause of human freedom.

We note that the resolutions of international legality in general are now being applied by new mechanisms which contribute vigorously to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations and the goals of its Charter. The realization of those objectives without discrimination will lead to the enhancement of the international Organization's effectiveness with all its organs and the achievement of the noble objectives for which the Organization was created.

All these new tendencies are in harmony with the movement of history, which has always worked in favour of man's dignity and freedom and rid man of oppression and injustice.

It was expected and required, after all the atrocities of the Second World War, that Israel and the Zionist movement should support such efforts and participate in this historic development and in the building of a new and better world.

However, Israel continued to delude itself in the belief that it could continue to move the wheels of history backwards and achieve objectives which it knew full well to be neither legitimate nor human. It has persisted in ejecting the Palestinian people, went on usurping that people's rights and territory through the falsification of history, in defiance of the resolutions

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of the Organization and international legality, forgetting that the will of peoples thirsting for freedom and dignity is much stronger and much more potent than any arsenal of sophisticated weaponry.

We have seen Palestinian men, women and children facing Israel's guns cannons and tanks with nothing but sticks and stones, with unbending determination. Despite the thousands of martyrs, thousands of casualties and detainees, the Palestinian intifadah has gone on unabated for four years.

Over the last few months, the Arab-Israeli dispute entered upon a very distinctive historic stage because, for the first time, the international community has been unanimously resolved to settle the dispute. The latest developments may have made it imperative for all, either directly or indirectly, to deal with the problems of peace, security and development through the civilized method of negotiation, on the basis of a true understanding of the interests involved, coupled with good will and far-sighted political sagacity.

However, despite every peace effort and the involvement of the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute in the peace process, Israel still deals with the situation from a posture built on the logic of force, arrogance and repression. Such logic can only lead to devastation, self-destruction and the destruction of others. Force, which is the mainstay of Zionist ideology seems to be an end in itself. Israel has been created and continues to subsist on violence and terrorism. Violence is the axis of its thinking and the basis of its policies and practices in the Arab-occupied territories.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

Israel has not shown yet any intention of renouncing the logic of violence and expansionism. Its illegal actions against the Palestinian people, its acts of collective punishment, torture, repression, the destruction and demolition of homes, the undermining of the means of gaining a livelihood, and of the economic, cultural and social establishments of the Palestinian people, the building of settlements in the occupied territories and the changing of the parameters of those territories continue unabated. All this is a part of the deliberate policy of usurping Arab lands, dispersing its owners and replacing them with Jewish immigrants.

This Israeli violence in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the other Arab occupied territories is not limited to people alone. It extends even to nature itself. Trees are uprooted and agricultural lands are destroyed with a view to depriving the Palestinians of their livelihood and forcing them to leave their land and country. In addition, there is the policy of plundering natural resources, particularly water. The Palestinians, the real owners of the land, are forbidden to sink wells and forced to pay exorbitant prices for the water they need.

History will hold Israel responsible for this organized destruction of the life of an entire people. It will also hold the international community responsible if it does not protect the Palestinian people from the consequences of such acts which aim at uprooting that people, both Muslim and Christian, and replacing it with alien Jews.

Despite all these arbitrary, unjust practices, I must emphasize to the Assembly that the Palestinian people will not give up its national rights and

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that it shall continue to struggle to regain those rights. This people has suffered injustice that is unprecedented in history.

The General Assembly knows full well that even on the day when the debate on the question of Palestine started, Israeli police took away from the Shariah Tribunal, by force, the deeds which prove ownership by the Waqf of lands and property in Al-Quds al-Shareef and the occupied territories.

This is part and parcel of a continuing and deliberate Israeli policy to usurp Arab lands, not only by force but also by forgery, confiscation and any other means at hand.

It seems that Israel refuses to be convinced of the need to end its defiance of international legality. The latest example of this is the intentional confrontation of the United States Secretary of State with the building of a settlement before every trip he made to the region in his bid to bring about a convergence of views on peace.

Such Israeli behaviour is not new, because Israel has behaved in the same way with regard to all previous initiatives, such as the Rogers, Reagan and Schulz initiatives. It behaved in the same way with regard to the initiatives of the Soviet Union, the European Community and third world countries.

It would not be an exaggeration to add to this list the Madrid Conference itself, which raised the hopes of the international community for the achievement of comprehensive peace.

The statement of Israeli Ambassador Yoram Aridor two days ago before the General Assembly contained many deceptive arguments. I do not have enough time to look into each one but will just respond to one question he raised.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

(spoke in English)

"Only if Arabs and Jews learn to live together side by side, to interact with each other, will peace have a chance of breaking out."

(A/46/PV.52, p. 41)

He went on to say

"Arab leaders are wont to claim that Jews and Arabs lived together in harmony in the past. I do not intend to analyse this claim now, but I will ask: why then can we not live together in the present?"

(Supra, p. 41)

(spoke in Arabic)

There is no doubt that this is a timely question by the Israeli representative. Indeed, why do Israelis and Arabs not live together in peace? Undoubtedly, Israel does not ignore the answer to that question. Who was it that ejected the Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim? Who was it that usurped their land? Who was it that replaced them with Jewish immigrants? Who was it that beseiged, and continues to beseige Palestinians in reservations which they cannot leave without permits from the Israeli military authorities? Who is it that puts on trial even those Israelis who are indicted under Israeli laws that prohibit any contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), even though the only objective of such contact is to build confidence and lay the foundations of the just and comprehensive peace in the region that the delegate of Israel bemoans so much? Who is it that prevents the Palestinian people from returning to live on its native soil? And who is it that prohibits intermingling and calls for a state in which there is no place for the gentiles?

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

May I conclude with a remark that deserves attention: If Israel were to abide by the principles and norms of international legality, were it to engage in the negotiations which the international community hopes for with a great deal of goodwill and a genuine desire for peace, then both sides and the whole world would have cause for optimism. Will Israel, this time, support peace efforts or will it abort them? Does Israel realize that the world is now moving towards a new world order which may not allow it to halt a historic development that spares the world the danger of armed confrontation and ensures for all a better life of safety, peace and stability? We all hope so.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.